

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-22 (Canceled).

Claim 23 (Withdrawn): A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component included in said conductive paste and is incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

Claim 24 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 23, wherein:

said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

Claim 25 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal particles.

Claim 26 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

Claim 27 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 26, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal particles.

Claim 28 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 26, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

Claim 29 (Withdrawn): A method for manufacturing a composite substance used to form a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

adding a solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, wherein said solvent is compatible with an organic component binder included in said conductive paste and incompatible with water, whereby said water is replaced by said solvent.

Claim 30 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 29, wherein:

said solvent is added in an amount of 3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 31 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 29, further comprising the step of:

adding a surface active agent together with said solvent, in an amount of 0.05 to 10.0 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the entire quantity of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 32 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of:

adding a second solvent which is compatible with water.

Claim 33 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is added in an amount of 0.3 to 30 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of the total quantity of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 34 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 32, wherein:

said second solvent is acetone.

Claim 35 (Withdrawn): A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of claim 23.

Claim 36 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 35, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 37 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 35, wherein:

the solvent included in said composite substance is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight units relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

Claim 38 (Canceled).

Claim 39 (Withdrawn): A method for manufacturing a conductive paste, comprising the step of:

mixing an organic binder and an organic solvent with the composite substance of Claim 29.

Claim 40 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 39, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 41 (Withdrawn): The method of claim 39, wherein:

the solvent included in said composite substance is present in an amount of 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

Claims 42-70 (Canceled).

Claim 71 (Currently Amended): Particles for a conductive paste, each of said particles comprising a metal particle and a solvent, wherein said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic ~~binder~~ component and insoluble in water,

prepared by a process comprising:

adding [[a]] said solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 72 (Previously Presented): The particles of claim 71, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 73 (Previously Presented): The particles of claim 71, wherein:

said solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal particles.

Claim 74 (Currently Amended): Particles for a conductive paste, each of said particles comprising a metal-compound particle and a solvent, wherein said metal-compound

particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic ~~binder~~ component and insoluble in water,

prepared by a process comprising:

adding ~~[[a]]~~ said solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 75 (Previously Presented): The particles of claim 74, wherein:

said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 76 (Previously Presented): The particles of claim 74, wherein:

said solvent comprises 2 to 100 parts by weight relative to 100 parts by weight of said metal-compound particles.

Claim 77 (Currently Amended): A conductive paste prepared from particles, wherein:

each of said particles comprises a metal particle and a solvent, said metal particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic ~~binder~~ component and insoluble in water; and

said particles are prepared by a process comprising:

adding ~~[[a]]~~ said solvent to undried metal particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 78 (Previously Presented): The conductive paste of claim 77, wherein:

said metal particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 79 (Currently Amended): A conductive paste prepared from particles, wherein:
each of said particles comprises a metal-compound particle and a solvent, said metal-compound particle is wetted by said solvent, and said solvent is compatible with an organic binder component and insoluble in water; and
said particles are prepared by a process comprising:
adding ~~[[a]]~~ said solvent to undried metal-compound particles which have been washed with water, thereby replacing said water by said solvent.

Claim 80 (Previously Presented): The conductive paste of claim 79, wherein:
said metal-compound particles have an average particle size of 1 μm or smaller.

Claim 81 (Previously Presented): An electronic component comprising:
a ceramic base body; and
at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,
wherein said at least one electrode is formed from the conductive paste of claim 77.

Claim 82 (Previously Presented): An electronic component comprising:
a ceramic base body; and
at least one electrode supported by said ceramic base body,
wherein said at least one electrode is formed from the conductive paste of claim 79.

DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Each of Claims 71, 74, 77 and 79 has been amended by replacing "binder" with --component--, as supported in the specification at, for example, page 5, line 9, and by replacing "a solvent" with --said solvent--. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67 and 69 have been canceled.

No new matter is believed to have been added by the above amendment. Claims 71-82 are now active in the application. Claims 23-37 and 39-41 stand withdrawn from consideration. Applicants hereby defer Petition under 37 C.F.R. § 1.144.